(c) whether NABARD has got such projects for other States like Madhya Pradesh; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) promotes organic farming and has refinanced Rs. 81 lakhs in Central Bank of India sanctioned projects for organic cultivation of the Alphonso mango in Savadipatti village of Theni District, Tamil Nadu, covering 54 hectares and involving a total outlay of Rs. 120 lakhs.

(c) and (d) NABARD has not received any proposal for organic cultivation of horticulture crops in other State like Madhya Pradesh.

Differential interest rates charged by banks

*392. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some of the Nationalised Banks have already given huge amount of loan to monopoly houses @ 6.5 per cent interest whereas they are charging 12.5 percent interest rates from self-help women groups and 16 per cent interest on agricultural and co-operative loans;

(b) if so, reasons for such a big difference in interest rates; and

(c) whether Government would like to rationalise the various rates of interest and give loan to farmers and self-help groups @ 6.5 per cent interest per annum?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) With the deregulation of interest rates, Banks determine their own lending rates, based on their cost of operations and their assessment of risk.

(c) At the Government's initiative, the Indian Banks' Association has already advised all Public Sector Banks to reduce the interest rates on crop loans, upto Rs. 50,000/-, to a maximum of 9% per annum.